

## Growths

I'd had them ever since I was a kid.

I can remember being incredibly self-conscious about them, hiding them in my pockets under books and bags. The kids at school never said anything to my face, but I knew they were laughing behind my back.

I remember asking my parents to take me to the doctor, to get them checked out. The growths on my hands seemed to be the elephant in the room back then, since they'd just say I was fine and change the subject.

I had tried to remove them as a child, but without avail. Trying to cut or scrape them off was always a lost cause because I couldn't continue once the pain kicked in.

But today was different. It's amazing how numb you can get with a couple of tourniquettes and a bottle of Jack Daniels. I was originally planning to use a sharp knife, but figured that trying to slice through the tough flesh of the growths would be too arduous in my drunken state. I opted for the slightly more technological plan B.

I had to hurry though. I was already pretty light-headed and was starting to feel dizzy. My hands and forearms, nearly blue from the lack of circulation, couldn't wait much longer either. The whirring of the blender helped to put me in a sort of trance-ready to do what I had wanted to do since I first looked down at my strange deformities.

I shoved my left hand in first. The immediate sensation of sharp blades slicing through flesh was jarring, but I was surprised at how well the alcohol was working—I expected it to hurt more. I could hear the sharp metal churning and cutting, working perfectly as planned. I pressed my hand down harder. All those bad memories, all of the embarrassment—all of those horrible things were now nothing more than a thick red pulp.

I pulled out before the blades hit knuckle. I smiled, taking a good look at my new hand. As for the growths—well, five down, and five to go.